

2026



Municipal Association
of South Carolina

MEO



Municipal Elected Officials
Institute of Government

*The South Carolina Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government,
Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government and the
Advanced Continuing Education programs are presented by the
Municipal Association of South Carolina.*



Commitment

As a local elected official, you have a responsibility to make sure your municipality operates responsively, efficiently and effectively. By participating in municipal government training, you are gaining the basic knowledge to help fulfill this responsibility.

More than 95 years ago, the Municipal Association of SC made a commitment to offer services that give municipal officials the knowledge, experience and tools for making the best public decisions for their cities and towns. Since 1986, the Association has offered the South Carolina Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government. The first class graduated in 1988. In 2014, the Association launched the Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute to provide continuing training to MEO Institute graduates.

In 2019, the Association launched the Advanced Continuing Education classes for Advanced Institute graduates to continue their learning in a noncredited self-directed track.

Contact information

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Basic Institute Requirements

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government provides 20 hours of instruction available through a combination of in-person and online courses. To graduate from the Institute, elected officials must complete the following seven courses:

- Session A
- Session B
- Basic Budgeting and Municipal Finance
- Forms of Municipal Government
- Freedom of Information Act in South Carolina
- Municipal Economic Development
- Municipal Governance and Policy

Officials must take Session A before Session B. The classes for Sessions A and B are held in Columbia each winter the day after the Association's Hometown Legislative Action Day. The other required courses may be taken in any order.

The Association offers the other required courses in two formats: once a year at the regional councils of governments' locations and on-demand 24/7. To access the courses, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: MEO). Officials must graduate from the MEO Institute before taking Advanced MEO Institute courses.

Respectively, officials must also graduate from the Advanced MEO Institute before enrolling in the Advanced Continuing Education classes.

Transcript

Refer to your MEO Institute transcript to determine which courses you have completed and which you need for graduation. Access your transcript by logging on to www.masc.sc with your user identification number and password, and then navigating to the MEO Institute page.

Session A and Session B

Sessions A and B are held in Columbia each winter the day after the Association’s Hometown Legislative Action Day. Officials must take Session A before enrolling in Session B (eight hours each). These sessions are only available to elected officials and are required to graduate from the MEO Institute.

2026 Schedule

Hometown Legislative Action Day

Tuesday, January 20, 2026

MEO Institute Sessions A or B

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Columbia Metro Convention Center
Columbia, SC

2027 Schedule

Hometown Legislative Action Day

Wednesday, February 10, 2027

MEO Institute Sessions A and B

Thursday, February 11, 2027

Columbia Metro Convention Center
Columbia, SC

Session A (9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)

The City as an Employer

Your most important resource as an employer should be your employees. Learn the basics of effective human resource management and the elected officials’ roles and responsibilities as a public sector employer.

Conducting Public Meetings

State law requires all municipalities to adopt and follow rules of procedure. Learn how to hold effective meetings by adopting, applying and enforcing rules of procedure and how they relate to issues such as noticing public meetings, holding executive sessions, establishing a quorum and taking minutes.

Ethics and Public Accountability

Public accountability is key to a local leaders’ credibility. Learn about the state Ethics Act that dictates proper campaign procedures, rules of conduct and financial disclosure.

Session A and Session B

An Overview of Local Government Planning and Zoning

Planning and zoning issues are complex, yet critical, to promote orderly growth, reduce land use conflicts, and prepare for the expansion of public services and facilities to serve developing areas. Explore the role of the planning commission and board of zoning appeals and learn about state laws governing their operation.

Visioning, Strategic Planning and Goal Setting

The ability of the mayor, councilmembers and staff to work together as a team for the common good of the community is a strong asset. Get tips for establishing a vision for your municipality, thinking strategically, translating ideas into strategies and working with others to put those strategies into action to reach defined goals.

Session B (9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)

Business License Tax Administration

Business licensing is an important source of municipal revenue, and state law is very specific about how to administer the tax properly. Is it legal to exempt individual businesses from paying the tax? Does state law require using gross receipts to calculate the tax? Find out the answers to these questions and more.

Intergovernmental Relations

Collaboration and sharing resources across all levels of government are critical to a municipality's success. Learn about the roles and responsibilities of federal, state and local governments in South Carolina; how to develop effective working relationships with officials on each level; and how advocacy is a way to ensure councils have the tools they need to lead their hometowns.

Liability of Municipalities and Their Elected Officials

Claims and litigation are unavoidable costs of providing municipal services. Explore how to avoid and reduce the number and costs of such claims and understand how public officials can be held individually liable for their actions while carrying out their duties.

Municipal Court – It's Purpose and Your Responsibilities

The municipal court is a vital tool in providing access to the justice system for your citizens. Learn about the purpose of the municipal court and your role and responsibilities as an elected official.

Other Required Courses

Courses

The MEO Institute includes five other required courses. Courses are offered once a year at select regional councils of governments locations and on-demand 24/7. Participants may choose the format that works best for them.

Basic Budgeting and Municipal Finance

Participating in the municipal budget process is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of a local official. Learn the most important steps in the budget process, from preparation to implementation, and understand council's responsibility for monitoring budget compliance.

Forms of Municipal Government

A council operates under one of three forms of municipal government in South Carolina. Learn about the roles and responsibilities of councilmembers, the mayor and the manager/administrator in each of the forms.

Freedom of Information Act in South Carolina

Open government is the cornerstone of accountable leadership. Learn about the state's FOIA requirements, including the release of public documents, proper notice of public meetings and the appropriate use of executive sessions.

Municipal Governance and Policy

Laws governing municipal authority in South Carolina are complex. Explore the legislative source of municipal authority, the meaning of the term "Home Rule," and how to implement effective municipal policies.

Municipal Economic Development

For municipalities to attract new businesses and grow existing businesses, local officials must establish an organizational commitment to economic development. Find out how to identify a community's economic development assets, develop a plan to take advantage of these assets and use available tools to finance projects.

Optional on-demand course (not for credit – no charge)

The Five Basics of Effective Governing: The campaign is over — now the hard work begins. This noncredited course lays the groundwork for municipal elected officials as they begin their municipal service. To access the course, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: Five Basics).

MEO Institute 2026 Schedule

Check-in starts at 9 a.m. Each session begins promptly at 9:30 a.m. and ends no later than 12:30 p.m. Lunch is provided. Cancellations must be made by the date specified on each registration. For registration questions, contact Christine Sumter at 803.933.1208 or csumter@masc.sc, or Urica Floyd at 803.354.4754 or ufloyd@masc.sc.

Courses offered in person at the regional councils of governments locations.
(Registration fee: \$35 each session)

March 17 *Registration deadline: March 9*
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

- Basic Budgeting and Municipal Finance

May 19 *Registration deadline: May 11*
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

- Municipal Governance and Policy
- Freedom of Information Act in South Carolina

September 22 *Registration deadline: September 14*
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

- Municipal Economic Development
- Forms of Municipal Government

Locations

Locations are subject to change. To verify locations, consult course registration material, visit the Association's website at www.masc.sc (keyword: MEO), or call 803.933.1208.

Appalachian Council of Governments
30 Century Circle,
Greenville

Municipal Association of SC (Central Midlands location)
1411 Gervais St.,
Columbia

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments
1230 Highmarket St.,
Georgetown

Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments
5790 Casper Padgett
Way, North Charleston

Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments
2314 Pisgah Road,
Florence

MEO Institute On-demand Course Registration Instructions

To register for the on-demand courses, go to www.masc.sc (keyword: MEO) and log in with your user identification number and password. All on-demand courses must be paid online with a credit card. Each course fee is \$35.

The on-demand courses can be accessed 24/7 from any computer, tablet or mobile device that has internet connection and may be taken in any order. Once registered, participants immediately receive an email with instructions on how to get started. Participants have 90 days to complete a course after registering online.

Available on-demand courses

- Basic Budgeting and Municipal Finance
- Forms of Municipal Government
- Freedom of Information Act in South Carolina
- Municipal Economic Development
- Municipal Governance and Policy

Courses offered on demand

(Registration fee: \$35 each course)

Elected officials may take courses according to their schedule and avoid delays associated with waiting for the once-a-year, in-person offerings. To access the courses, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: MEO).

Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

The Advanced Institute provides elected officials who have graduated from the MEO Institute an option for continuing education. Participants can choose between two advanced courses offered each winter and fall. To complete the Advanced Institute, participants must complete four of the six courses offered.

- Advanced Advocacy and Intergovernmental Relations
- Advanced Budgeting and Finance
- Advanced Leadership and Governance
- Advanced Municipal Economic Development
- Municipal Utility Policy and Administration
- Public Safety Policy and Administration

January 21, 2026 Courses

Municipal Utility Policy and Administration

Most South Carolina municipalities own and operate utility systems. These systems are critical to the health and safety of residents and their economic prosperity. Participants will learn the basics of utility policy and administration, including the legal authority municipal utilities have to operate and serve new customers.

Public Safety Policy and Administration

Public Safety Policy and Administration will focus on the elected official's leadership role and responsibilities related to public safety. Experienced public safety and municipal court practitioners will discuss police, fire and municipal court policies, best practices and operations.

2026 Schedule

Advanced courses (Registration fee: \$125)

January 21 | 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Columbia Metropolitan Convention
Center, Columbia, SC

- Municipal Utility Policy and Administration
- Public Safety Policy and Administration

Registration deadline: January 8

October 14 | 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Columbia Metropolitan Convention
Center, Columbia, SC

- Advanced Advocacy and Intergovernmental Relations
- Advanced Municipal Economic Development

Registration deadline: October 5

October 2026 Advanced Institute Courses

Advanced Advocacy and Intergovernmental Relations

Municipal elected officials must educate members of the General Assembly on how bills impact their cities and towns. Learn successful strategies to navigate the legislative process on behalf of your hometown and take your advocacy skills to a new level. Get a behind the scenes tour of the State House and capitol complex and hear from a panel of seasoned lobbyists about the challenges of working a bill through the legislative process.

Advanced Municipal Economic Development

Advanced Municipal Economic Development will concentrate on how to identify a municipality's unique assets, promote these assets, develop strategic partnerships, and use available tools and incentives to encourage private sector investment and job creation.

2026 Schedule

Advanced courses (Registration fee: \$125)

October 14, 2026 | 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, Columbia, SC

- Advanced Advocacy and Intergovernmental Relations
- Advanced Municipal Economic Development

Information will be mailed in July 2026.

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Advanced Continuing Education

The Advanced Continuing Education track provides the Association's top level of graduates with a pathway to stay current on the latest issues in local government. This track is self-directed for mayors and councilmembers who seek to continually work toward being the best public servant for their cities and towns. These courses focus on current topics and will be available exclusively to Advanced MEO Institute graduates.

Advanced Continuing Education classes are offered with each advanced training session held in January and October.

January 21, 2026 Topics

- Municipal Elected Officials and the Media
- Tech Talk with VC3

October 14, 2026 Topics

The topic descriptions will be available at a later date.

2026 Schedule

ACE courses (Registration fee: \$125)

January 21, 2026 | 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, Columbia, SC

- Municipal Elected Officials and the Media
- Tech Talk with VC3

October 14, 2026 | 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Columbia, SC

- *The topic descriptions will be available at a later date.*

Information will be mailed in July 2026.



Save the Date

Newly Elected Officials Virtual Training Session

December 3, 2025 | 9 a.m. – noon

Registration open online Wednesday,
November 3, 2025.

This is a free, noncredited event.